Life Skills Education

S. LAKSHMANAN
Psychologist (Govt. Registered)

CONCLUSIONS FROM A UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY MEETING

April 1998

Life skills education is designed to facilitate the practice and reinforcement of psychosocial skills in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way; it contributes to the promotion of personal and social development, the prevention of health and social problems, and the protection of huma s.

Department of Mental Health

World Health Organization

Geneva

Basic Areas of Life Skills

- Decision Making
- Problem solving
- Creative Thinking
- Critical Thinking
- Effective Communication
- Interpersonal Relationship
- Self Awareness
- Empathy
- Coping with Emotions
- Coping with Stress

Why these life skills are taught

- **HIV/AIDS is prevented by the teaching of life skills education in Zimbabwe and Thailand**
- **Adolescent Pregnancy is prevented by the teaching of life skills education in Mexico**
- **child abuse is prevented by the teaching of life skills education in U.K.**
- **Substance abuse and violence are prevented by the teaching of life skills education in USA**

Life skills Education has different Name

- **In South Africa, It is called as “Life Orientation” education**
- **In Colombia, It is called as “Integral Education”.**

DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

Life skills education appears to be out of step with the realities of modern social and economic life. Problems such as violence in schools and student drop-out are crippling the ability of school systems to achieve their academic goals. Furthermore, in addition to its wide-ranging applications in primary prevention and the advantages that it can bring for education systems, life skills education lays the foundation for learning skills that are in great demand in today's job markets.

SHARED CONCERNS

Shared concerns identified by participants in relation to life skills education included the need to:

- **Strengthen and improve school health;**
- **Promote the development of long-term and holistic life skills curricula in schools;**
- **Promote democracy, gender equality and peace;**
- **Prevent health and social problems including psychoactive substance use, HIV/AIDS, adolescent pregnancy and violence**

SHARED CONCERNS

The meeting also identified a shared concern for:

- **The needs of adolescents;**
- **The importance of supporting life skills initiatives for children who do not attend school.**

Defining life skills

The term “life skills” is open to wide interpretation. However, there was a consensus that all participants were using the term to refer to psychosocial skills. Keywords used to describe psychosocial skills were: personal, social, interpersonal, cognitive, affective, universal.

Defining life skills

The following list of descriptive words and phrases was generated during a brainstorming session to identify life skills.

Dealing with conflict that cannot be resolved, dealing with authority, solving problems, making and keeping friends/relationships, cooperation, self-awareness, creative thinking, decision-making, critical thinking, dealing with stress, negotiation, clarification of values, resisting pressure, coping with disappointment, planning ahead, empathy, dealing with emotions, assertiveness, active listening, respect, tolerance, trust, sharing, sympathy, compassion, sociability, self-esteem

Why teach life skills?

The Meeting considered that life skills are essential for:

- **The promotion of healthy child and adolescent development;**
- **Primary prevention of some key causes of child and adolescent death, disease and disability;**
- **Socialization;**
- **Preparing young people for changing social circumstances.**

Why teach life skills?

Life skills education contributes to:

- **Basic education;**
- **Gender equality;**
- **Democracy;**
- **Good citizenship;**
- **Child care and protection;**
- **Quality and efficiency of the education system;**
- **The promotion of lifelong learning;**
- **Quality of life;**
- **The promotion of peace.**

Why teach life skills?

Areas of primary prevention for which life skills are considered essential include:

- **Adolescent Pregnancy;**
- **HIV/AIDS;**
- **Violence;**
- **Child Abuse;**
- **Suicide;**
- **Problems related to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other psychoactive substances;**
- **Injuries;**
- **Accidents;**
- **Racism;**
- **Conflict;**
- **Environmental issues.**

Why teach life skills?

The following reasons why life skills are essential for primary prevention were listed during a brainstorming session:

Demands of modern life, poor parenting, changing family structure, dysfunctional relationships, new understanding of young people's needs, decline of religion, rapid socio-cultural change.

THANK YOU

www.psychology.way.to